

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

ETHIOPIA

By Philip M. Mobbs

The war with Eritrea concerning national boundaries continued in 1999. Exploration and production operation in northern Ethiopia were adversely affected by the hostilities. The war, coupled with the downturn in international gold prices and resultant reduction in the availability of financing for mineral exploration and development projects, temporarily diverted the Government's focus on increasing foreign investment in Ethiopia's mineral sector. Privately owned operations produced construction materials and gold. The state-owned Ethiopian Mineral Resources Development Corp. produced feldspar, kaolin, silica sand, and talc. During 1999, the Federal Government continued to evaluate bids on the sale of a 51% equity interest in the Calub Gas Share Co., which was an eight-well natural gas venture in the Ogaden region.

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Ethiopia, see the 1998 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

Major Source of Information

Ministry of Mines and Energy

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Major Publications

Ministry of Mines and Energy, undated, Geology, mineral occurrences, mining policy and investment opportunities in Ethiopia: Ministry of Mines and Energy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24 p.

Wegner, Hans-Ulrich, and Häusser, Ilse, 1996, Äthiopien: Hannover/Berlin, Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe, Rohstoffwirtschaftliche Länderberichte 39, 103 p.

TABLE 1
ETHIOPIA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/ 3/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 e/	
Cement, hydraulic e/	611,437 4/	663,000 r/	750,000 r/	775,000 r/	700,000	
Clays: e/ 5/						
Brick	7,000	7,000	6,000	6,000	5,000	
Kaolin (China clay)	15	15	16	15	15	
Diatomite	150	150	150	125	120	
Feldspar e/	4,000	4,000	5,000	5,000	4,000	
Gold, mine output, Au content	kilograms	4,500	2,500	3,000	2,500	2,000
Gypsum and anhydrite, crude	124,000	124,000	120,000	100,000	100,000	
Lime	3,091	3,100	2,500	3,000	2,500	
Pumice e/ 5/	360,000	360,000	325,000	325,000	300,000	
Salt, rock e/	5,000	5,000	1,000 r/	1,000 r/	1,000	
Scoria e/	240,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	
Soda ash, natural	20,000	20,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	
Stone, sand and gravel: e/ 5/						
Construction stone, crushed	thousand tons	750	750	750	1,000	1,000
Dimension stone 6/		38,000	38,000	40,000	130,000	100,000
Limestone	thousand tons	3,215 4/	3,300	3,300	3,400	3,000
Sand 7/	do.	1,600	1,600	1,600	2,500	2,500
Silica sand		6,000	6,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Tantalite, concentrate (40% Ta ₂ O ₅)	20	20	20	20	20	

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Data are for year ending July 7 of the year listed.

2/ In addition to the commodities listed, some lignite, semiprecious gemstones, steel semimanufactures, and talc reportedly were produced, and silver was reportedly contained in gold ingots from the Lege Dembi Mine, but information is inadequate to estimate output.

3/ No platinum production was officially reported after 1988. Some artisanal platinum probably continued to be produced, and platinum was also reported by others as being contained in gold ingots from the Lege Dembi Mine, which started up in 1990.

4/ Reported figure.

5/ When reported as volume or pieces, conversions to metric tons are estimated.

6/ Includes marble.

7/ May include gravel.